

UK supports Malawi's energy diversification drive

On Monday, British High Commissioner to Malawi, David Beer, joined Malawi's Minister for Energy Newton Kambala and officials from InfraCo Africa and JCM Power (JCM) in launching the Golomoti Solar, which will deliver 20 megawatts of clean power to the grid, at a ground breaking ceremony in Dedza District.

The project is being undertaken by InfraCo Africa, part of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), and its project partner, JCM Power (JCM).

UK Government is pleased to be a partner to this innovative joint financing project by providing, through Innovate UK, a £2.1 million grant to provide state of the art batteries. These will enable the plant to provide reliable power and improve network stability, reducing reliance on hydro and diesel generation, whilst ensuring that grid stability is maintained. In addition, the UK through InfraCo Africa, one of UK's Infrastructure Financing Agencies, is a 25% shareholder to the project through equity financing.

British High Commissioner to Malawi, David Beer, said:

Malawi urgently needs to develop a more diverse energy supply. This project is a clear marker that renewable technologies are the best route for the country, and shows what commercial and political creativity can achieve. The UK commits to continue being an investment partner of choice for Malawi in such sustainable projects aimed at helping the country build a better and greener future.

InfraCo Africa's Chief Executive Officer, Gilles Vaes, said:

As part of our commitment to Malawi's renewable energy sector, we are pleased to be working with our partners at JCM to deliver a further 20MWAC of clean power to the grid. This key milestone has been made possible by the strong support the project has received from the Government of Malawi, regulators and the state utility, ESCOM. By generating additional power and pioneering energy storage, Golomoti Solar will ensure that homes and businesses in Malawi will have access to more reliable electricity to drive economic growth.

JCM Power's Co-Founder and Head of Africa, Justin Woodward, said:

During what has been an unprecedented year, this project marks a

renewed commitment from all stakeholders that Malawi is an attractive destination for foreign investment. With the addition of batteries, the project will provide the foundation for Malawi to continue to be a regional leader in the renewable energy industry.

20MWac solar photovoltaic (PV) coupled with a 5MW/10MWh lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Golomoti Solar Project has benefited from knowledge-sharing with its sister project, Salima Solar, with both projects (among the first commercial-scale solar photovoltaic plants in the country) key to transforming regulatory frameworks around Malawi's renewable energy sector. Salima Solar is expected to begin delivering power to Malawi's national grid in early 2021, with Golomoti becoming operational in the latter half of 2021.

Malawi has an electrification rate of just 18%, with only 11% connected to the grid, and frequent power outages affecting economic productivity.

Malawi's energy sector is currently reliant upon hydro power; however, rainfall fluctuations have severely impacted electricity generation in recent years.

The Government of Malawi has recognised energy as a key driver of economic growth in its Growth and Development Strategy (2017-2022) and is working to establish regulatory frameworks needed to attract private sector investment to Malawi's energy sector.

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